

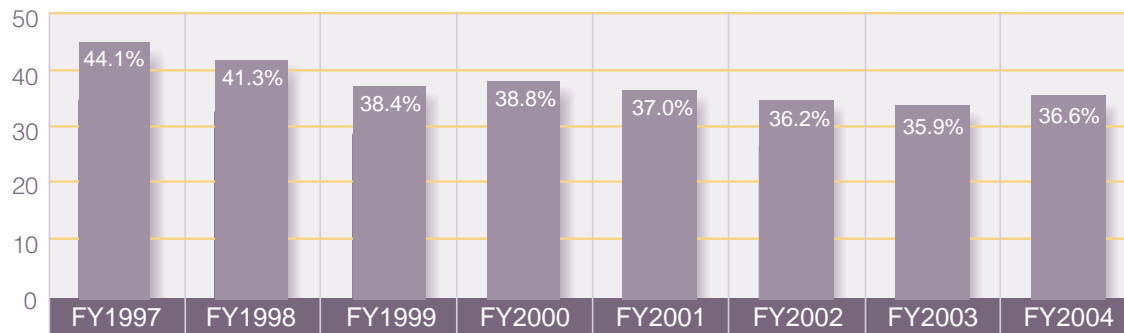
Objective **Decrease length of stay without increasing re-entry** Measured by **Length of stay for children in care**

Whenever children must be placed into out-of-home care to provide for their safety, every effort is made to ensure that their temporary placement is stable and that a permanent home is secured as quickly as possible.

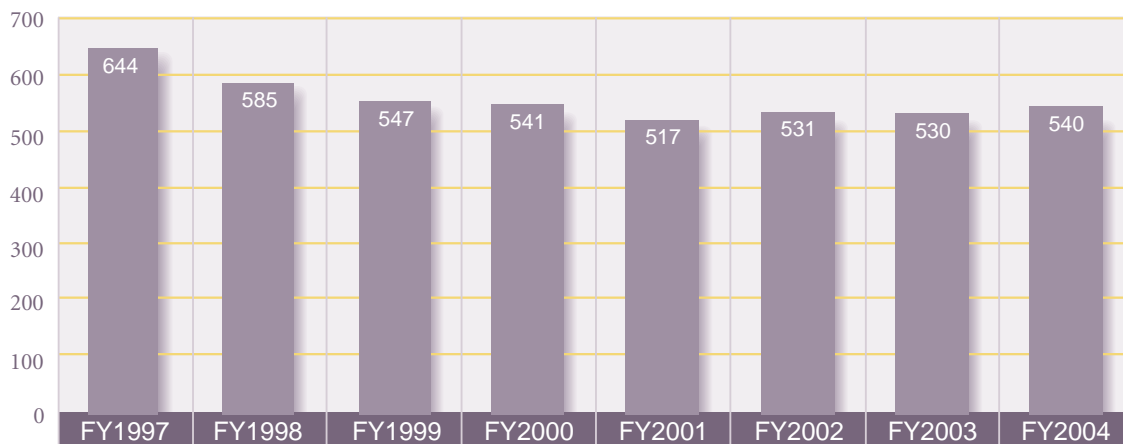
The percent of children who have been in care longer than two years has decreased from 44 percent to 37 percent since tracking began in 1997. In Fiscal Year 2004, 36.6 percent of children in care had been in care more than two years.

The median number of days children spend in out-of-home care has ranged from a high of 644 days in Fiscal Year 1997 to a low of 517 in Fiscal Year 2001. For the most recent reporting period, children spent 540 median days in out-of-home care.

Children in Care More than 2 years*



Median Number of Days Children are Placed in Care**



* Percent of children in DCFS custody in care for more than 60 days, who have a cumulative time in care during their current placement episode of greater than two years.

** Median cumulative time in care for all children in care for more than 60 days.

Note: This measure is calculated based upon the population of children in care for more than 60 days to more clearly depict the status of children for whom the administration is actively conducting permanency planning. Sixty days was the chosen "cut off" point because children who stay in care at least 60 days must have a permanency plan completed at this point. If children who are placed for very short periods were included in this measure of children in care more than two years, it would inaccurately skew the understanding of the percent of children who are placed for much longer periods of time.

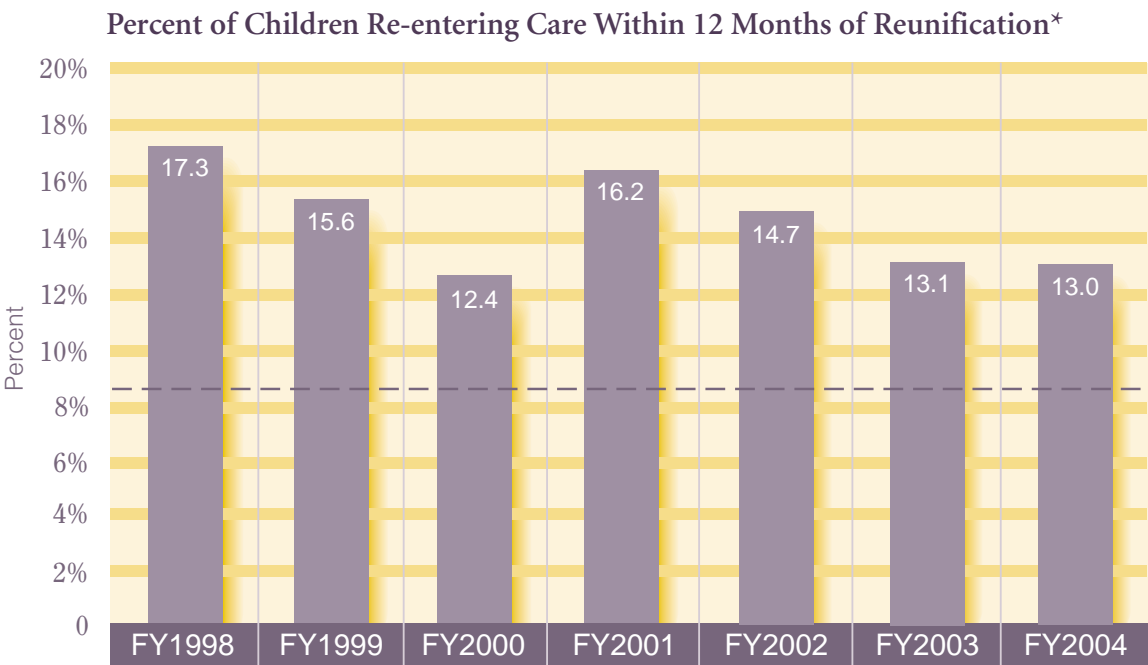
Objective Decrease length of stay without increasing re-entry
Measured by Children re-entering care

Parents whose children have been placed into state custody must demonstrate the willingness and ability to adequately protect and provide for their children in order to regain custody.

The Children's Administration monitors compliance with reunification plans, helps to establish safety plans and works to support parents seeking to reunify their families.

Despite a number of efforts to improve the safety and stability of children returning home, there are those children who must again be placed into out-of-home care.

Over the course of the past eight years, increased emphasis upon safety and additional supports for families have resulted in the gradual but continual decrease in re-entry rates statewide.



*Percent of children who re-enter out-of-home care within 12 months of reunification with their parents, regardless of length-of-stay. Data included in this chart is based on federal fiscal year data submitted to the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS). The national standard is 8.6 percent.

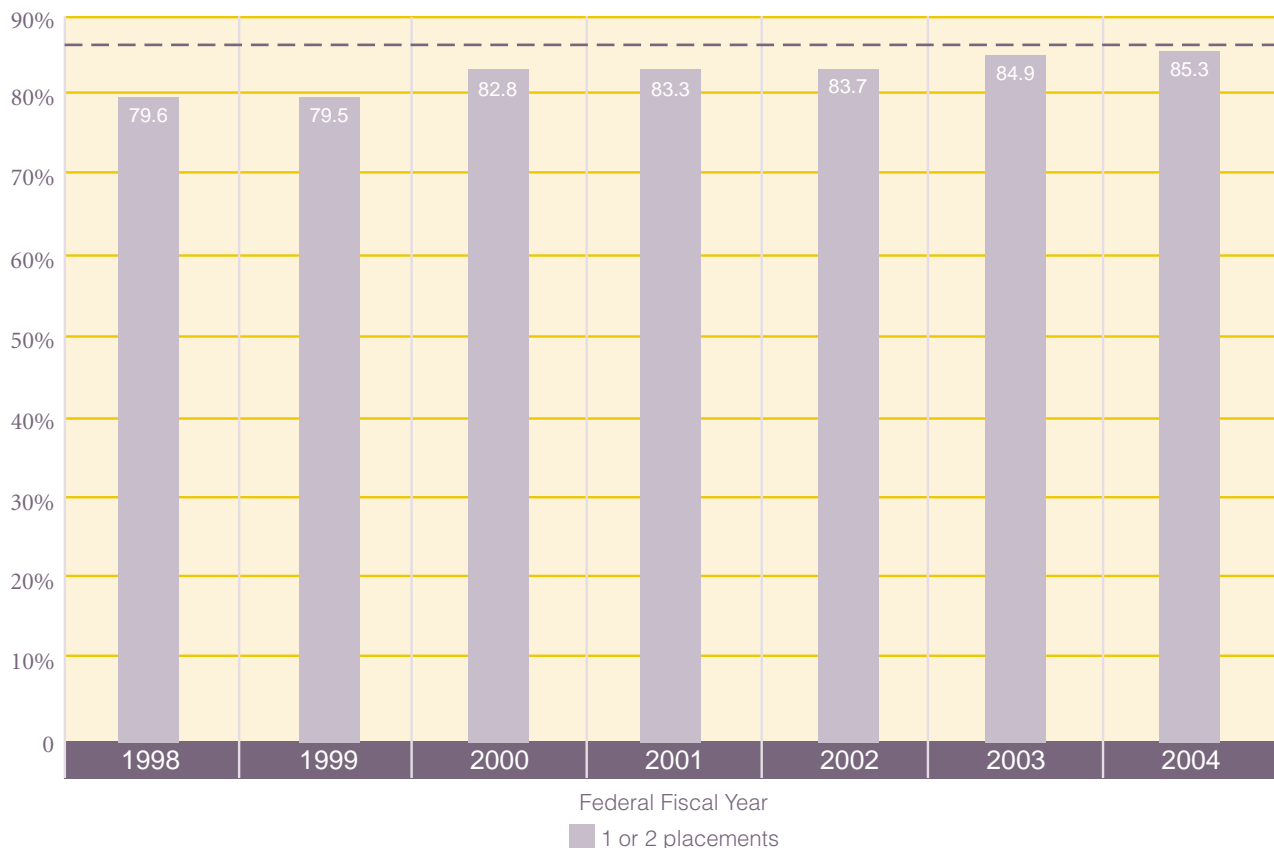
Objective **Increase stability for children in out-of-home care** Measured by **Children with no more than two placements**

Placement stability is integral to a child's sense of well-being. Being placed away from one's family is challenging enough for children who must face out-of-home placement without having multiple moves added to that experience.

Providing children with a sense of permanency requires that children placed in foster care do not experience multiple moves because changes in placement can be detrimental to children. CA works to match the needs of children with families who can meet their needs for safety and stability.

The majority of children in foster care in Washington State experience two or fewer moves within their first year in care. While performance regarding this outcome has shown progress in the eight years tracked, the administration continues exploring ways to improve placement stability.

Percent of Children with Two or Fewer Placements*



*Percent of children in DCFS custody who have only one or two principle places or homes of residence (placement events) during their first 12 months in care (or exiting from care within 12 months), excluding respite care, hospital stays, on-the-run, and similar types of placements which do not represent a deliberate change of residence. Data included in this chart is based on federal fiscal year data submitted to the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS). The national standard is 86.7 percent or higher.

Permanency

Objective **Decrease over-representation of minority children in care** Measured by **Minority children in care longer than two years**

Throughout Washington State and across the nation, there are disproportionate numbers of African American and Native American children in out-of-home care and they stay in care for longer periods of time than other racial and ethnic groups.

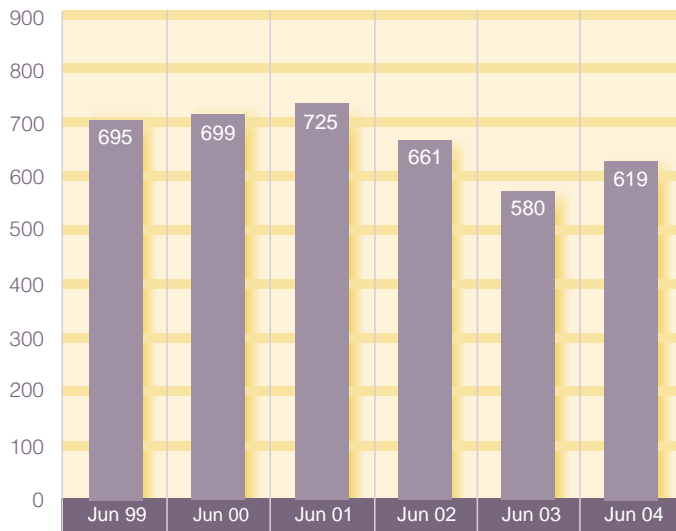
The Children's Administration has long worked toward identifying the causative factors behind this trend in an effort to better meet the needs of minority children in care.

The Children's Administration established the Office of African American Children's Services in an effort to address system issues and improve practice with reference to African American children and their families.

The administration has also worked toward increased consultation and collaboration with tribes statewide, both towards the goal of improving compliance with Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) mandates and improving outcomes for Native American children.

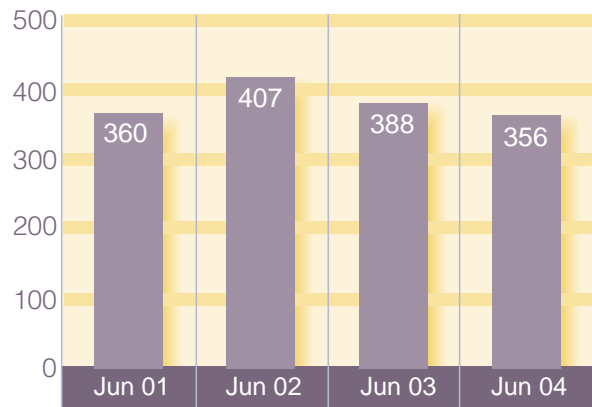
In Fiscal Year 2004, the number of African American children in care for longer than two years increased slightly while the number of Native American children in long term care decreased.

African-American Children in Care for More than 2 Years*



*The number of African-American children who have been placed in out-of-home care for two years or longer who are not in their permanent home.

Native American Children in Care for More than 2 Years**



**The number of Native-American children who have been placed in out-of-home care for two years or longer who are not in their permanent home.

Objective Increase relative placements

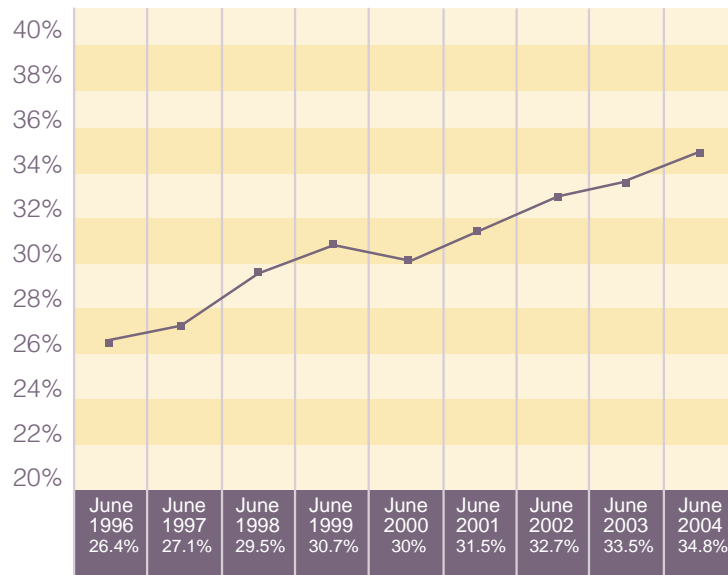
Measured by Children placed with extended family members

Family continuity is vital to any child's sense of well-being. For children who cannot remain safely in their own homes, the experience of living with other family members is more helpful than being placed with unknown foster parents. Being with kin, eating familiar food, or celebrating holidays according to their family traditions is reassuring and comforting to children.

The Children's Administration seeks to maintain continuity of family relationships for children in out-of-home care through ongoing visitation and, when appropriate, placement with a relative.

Over the course of the past nine years, the administration has been successful in placing more children with extended family, increasing from 26 percent to 35 percent of children placed with family members. In addition, CA has provided increased support to relatives raising children, such as training and financial assistance.

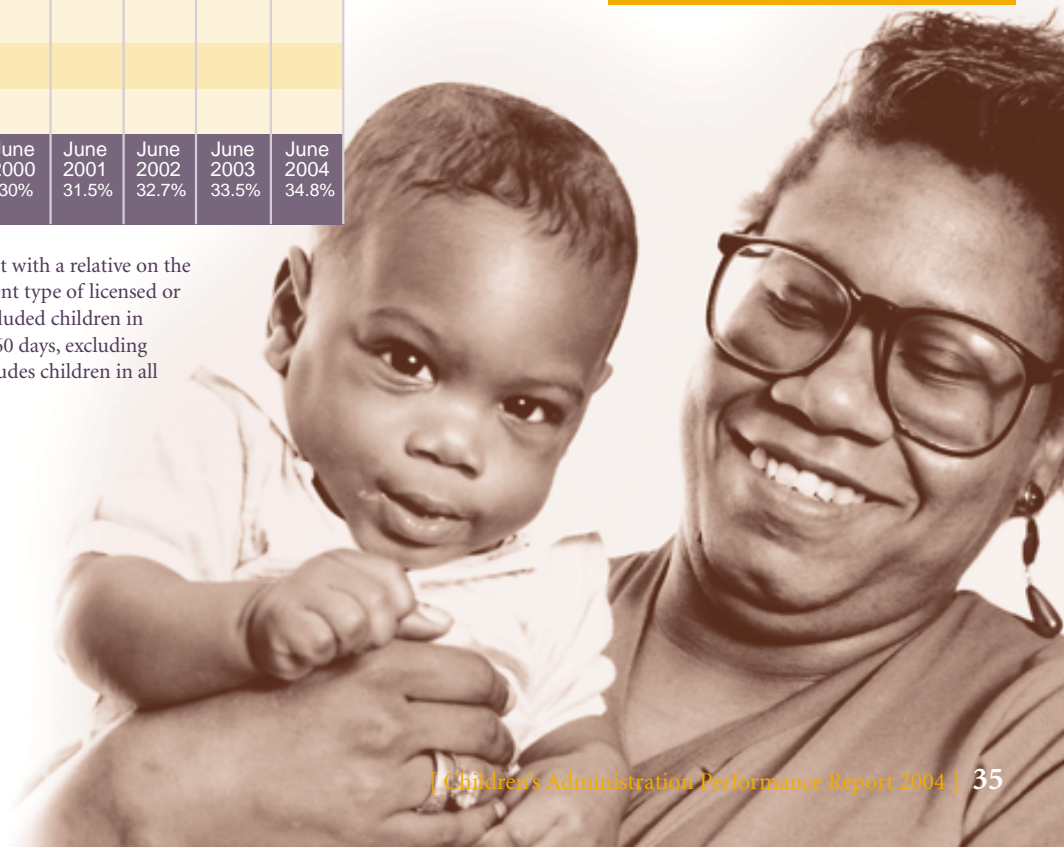
Children in Placement with Relatives*



*The percent of children in placement with a relative on the last day of the quarter with a placement type of licensed or unlicensed relative. Prior to 2003, included children in placement with a relative for at least 60 days, excluding guardianships. Since April 2003, includes children in all lengths of stay.

Progress

- Convened Kinship Oversight Committee to address issues concerning relative placements
- Collaborated with community-based groups to implement kinship support groups for grandparents and other relatives caring for children
- Hired Relative Search Specialists in some regions to increase efforts toward locating relatives as placements for children in care
- Increased support for relatives to complete PRIDE curriculum training
- Expedited foster care licenses for relatives
- Secured funding to provide some financial assistance to relative caregivers



Objective Preserve connections with parents, siblings, and other significant people
Measured by Children visiting with their parents

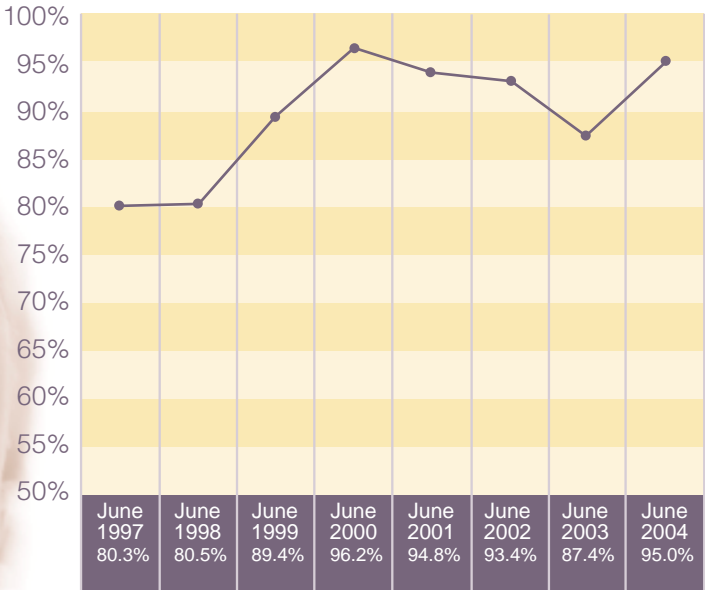
Children who have been placed in out of home care benefit from ongoing contact with their parents, siblings and other important adults in their lives. Continuity of relationships and preserving connections supports the emotional well-being of children. This is especially true for children where the plan is reunification with their family.

Children frequently feel a strong sense of attachment to their families and maintaining contact with parents, siblings and extended family members may help to stabilize children in their out-of-home placements and to retain critical connections which facilitate successful reunification when children return home.

The Children's Administration is required by law to encourage and facilitate child and caregiver visitation whenever to do so is determined to be safe and in the best interest of the child. CA monitors the frequency with which children and their families visit, requiring that visitations occur at least once in every 30-day period; however, visitations usually occur far more frequently.

Most children whose permanency plan is reunification visit with their parents at least monthly. However, due to certain safety issues, court actions and other factors such as inability to locate parents, it is not always possible or in the best interest of certain children to visit with their parents, thus this measure will never reach 100 percent.

Parent/Permanent Caregiver and Child Visitation*



* Percent of children with a permanent plan of reunification who visited with their parent or permanent caregiver at least once within the last 30 days of the quarter. Handcounts 1997-2003; Case Review 2004.